



40 Clifford Street, Hartford, CT 06114 * Ph: 860-692-3066 * ccj.org

Written Testimony Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Judiciary Committee in support of S.B. 392 and S.B. 387 with the recommendations submitted by the Connecticut Justice Alliance, and in opposition to S.B. 365, S.B. 388, H.B. 5418, H.B. 5417, S.B. 386, and S.B. 16.

March 29, 2022

To the Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Winfield and Representative Stafstrom, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

We write from the Collaborative Center for Justice, a Catholic social justice advocacy organization, primarily sponsored by six Congregations of Women Religious across the state. Our mission includes working for systemic change and advocating for policies that improve the lives of low-income and other marginalized people.

The Collaborative Center is a founding member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA), and we have worked hard with this group and other advocates to support criminal justice reforms such as the clean slate legislation last session. We are concerned that many of the bills raised in the Judiciary Committee this legislative session would have harmful impacts on young people, particularly Black and brown children, across the state.

We are concerned that many of these proposals included in the bills we oppose are arising out of a place of unfounded fear that has arisen from misinformation about the current level of crime in the state.

We reject any legislation that does the following:

- Promotes vigilantism among citizens. Any bill with an emphasis on empowering residents to prevent unlawful entry positions them in far too active a role. The murders of Trayvon Martin, and more recently, Ahmaud Arbery, are examples of the dangers inherent to citizens taking the law into their own hands.
- Lowers the age of transfer to adult court.
- That would allow for the electronic monitoring of a child who has been released to their parent or guardian. GPS monitoring is a financially costly and ineffective strategy for reducing crime or addressing the needs of the child.

- That would allow the indefinite holding of a child in police custody.

We instead urge lawmakers to focus time and resources on addressing many of the true needs of children and youth in the state, including increasing access to: mental health treatment and support; paid job training and employment opportunities; sports, recreation, and other extracurricular activities; and affordable housing.

The place of the child is in the community, and the community's institutions are the most appropriate and effective vehicles for the services children need: families, schools, religious institutions, non-punitive government agencies, among others. Prisons and jails, on the other hand, are harmful to youth development and desirable life outcomes. Youth held in detention, even pretrial detention, often have worse outcomes than those who are not. One 2020 study found that detention increased the rate of youth recidivism by 33% for felonies and 11% for misdemeanors, respectively. It also found that, for lengthier stays, the rate of recidivism increased 1% per day of detention.¹

We write in support of:

S.B. 387: An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

S.B. 392 An Act Concerning Statements Made by Juveniles.

We write in opposition to the following bills:

S.B. 388: An Act Concerning the Defense of a Person or a Person's Dwelling, Place of Work or Motor Vehicle

H.B. 5418: An Act Revising Juvenile and Criminal Justice Statutes and Insurance Statutes Concerning Theft of a Motor Vehicle

H.B. 5417: An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice and Services and Firearms Background Checks

S.B. 386: An Act Concerning a Study of the Juvenile Delinquency Laws of This State

S.B. 365: An Act Concerning Juvenile and Criminal Justice Reforms

We are testifying in opposition to the bills we listed above because many of these proposed changes are rooted in false claims that Connecticut is experiencing tremendously high rates of crime being committed by youth. This is simply not supported by data. This crime rhetoric is being used to cause fear and push for reforms that, in the end, will result in more Black and Brown youth and low-income white youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Increased detention and incarceration will not provide children and youth the community supports, treatment, or basic needs necessary to address many of the root issues youth are facing.

¹ Sarah Cusworth Walker and Gerald R. Herting. "The Impact of Pretrial Juvenile Detention on 12-Month Recidivism: A Matched Comparison Study." [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0011128720926115#:~:text=Using%20propensity%20score%20matching%2C%20analyses,%25%20increased%20risk%20per%20day\).](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0011128720926115#:~:text=Using%20propensity%20score%20matching%2C%20analyses,%25%20increased%20risk%20per%20day).)

The majority of the proposals included in the bills we oppose will not provide a real solution for the issues related to crime in our state.

We urge you to SUPPORT S.B. 392 and S.B. 387 with the recommendations submitted by the Connecticut Justice Alliance, and to OPPOSE S.B. 365, S.B. 388, H.B. 5418, H.B. 5417, S.B. 386, and S.B. 16.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on these bills.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwayne David Paul, Director

Rachel Lea Scott, Associate Director